

Paddling 'Round the Seasons 'Round Eastern Neck By Marshall Woodruff



Marshall

photo by Ralph Heimlich

Every time I paddle, it is an adventure for me. I am happy to be alive and tasting all there is and kayaking does this for me. Sharing it is frosting on the cake, and I like to give back to CPA, so I organized three trips to one of my favorite paddling places this season: Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

Every trip to Eastern Neck is always different. The turn out of paddlers for each trip were those that enjoy being out in nature and having that door open to them even more. Like me, they enjoy meeting new people and the camaraderie of fellow paddlers. They were a nice mix on both paddles. Our paddles sometimes push us to our limits with distance and conditions, but the rewards at the end of the day are the memories and accomplishments.

When we paddled on June 18, it was a beautiful, warm day, the summer paddling season just emerging. The trees were in full leaf, song birds were twittering in the background, and there were lots of herons, egrets, and ducks, not to forget the circling seagulls. We saw an occasional osprey and eagle, a few turtle heads bobbing, and heard the drone of motorboats passing in the distance. We were on the water, lost in our own world, and enjoying it. Along with

me in June were Manuel Vera, Tom Heneghan, Mike Cohn, Lisa Arrasmith, Chuck ?, Suzanne and Kevin Copping, Eileen Burns and Nelson Labbe.

Our October trip opened the door for the migrating birds. We saw a few of many different species, including eagles, osprey, herons, and jumping fish, against a background of fully-leafed trees just starting to change, and noticed a new chill in water temperatures and a change in the air—not summer anymore. The last of the motor boats roared by, and the sailors relished the brisk breeze. The bay that day was rough, and we prudently reversed and took another route than our planned circumnavigation. Despite the change in plans, we still did not miss the sights abounding and certainly had fun. Dave Blanpied, our speaker for that trip, talked about his specialty, the island and how the Refuge was created. As we paddled, we envisioned the past and the change that occurred. That day, as we paddled, we saw the island with a different perspective. Paddling that day were Suzanne Copping, Dan Hoke, Manuel Vera, Andy DeVito, Debbie Hofbeck, Ralph Heimlich, Mildred Porter, Gina Cicotello, Jack Wengrynink, Dale Murphy, and Kingsley Chan.



Bridge to Eastern Neck Island

Photo by Ralph Heimlich

Howard's Talk

Photo by Jesse Aronson



With our November paddle, we had another speaker to introduce us to what we were about to see. Howard MacIntire, is the official bird counter (who knew?) for the island, and the news he brought was that earlier in the week 5,000 tundra swans arrived from the North!!! We couldn't have asked for a nicer day—clear, cool and calm—but it could have been cold, rainy and rough because we make the best of what is dealt us. We were not disappointed. After Howard's talk, we seemed to be keener in "seeing" the pintail ducks, loons, eagles, swans and all that was to be seen that day. As we paddled, the vision was awe-inspiring. Along the horizon were miles of white—the tundra swans. This sight was hard to believe, and hearing them take off was something we will not forget. In November, Brian Blankinship,

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 6) **'Round Eastern Neck**

Gerry Gilstrop, Rebecca Pepkowitz, Jennifer Bine, Kingsley Chan, Tom Heneghan, Mary and Vitas Eidukevicius, Jesse Aronsen, and Sally Baker paddled with me.

As you can see, even though we return to the same locale, every paddle is a different adventure, and the new people we meet make it even more memorable. I want to thank all who came on these trips for sharing the Eastern Neck with me as the seasons changed.

Editor's Note: See [Marshall's January 7 trip](#), planning to go back to Eastern Neck in winter.

Off Eastern Neck Photo by Vitas Eidukevicius



Learning Skills photo by Robert Woodward

Saturday night is the barbeque (included in the price) and bonfire. Bring your S'more fixin's. Musicians are always appreciated! Sunday will feature walk-in classes both on land and water (at least the rolling instructors "walk-in").

This is not commercial instruction. The money collected goes towards expenses. If you are an [American Canoe Association](#) member, you can save the insurance fee. The only way to register is using [the form](#) in this newsletter—but don't delay. SK102 usually fills within two weeks.

For the latest information check out www.cpakayaker.com/forums under Events, SK102.

8th Annual SK102 (Continued from page 1)

Friday night starts with a night paddle, so bring your lights. Removed from major cities, the night sky is brighter. Throw in plenty of good company and it's hard to beat 60 or 70 kayaks lit like fireflies on the lake. Saturday we will have two blocks of classes, before and after lunch. When classes are over, there are kayak games, impromptu rolling competitions and just messing about in boats (and on land).



Chow Line photo by Robert Woodward